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LETTERS FROM A TEACHER TO HER YOUNG FEMALE FRIEND, JUST ABOUT COMMENCING TO KEEP SCHOOL.

No. XVI.

My dear L——: You will recollect, in the survey of the mountains of Asia, the lofty table land in its centre, surrounded by a double ridge of mountains. From these ridges, all the large rivers of that country, whether they flow north, south, east, or west, take their rise.

Siberia is separated from European Russia by the Ural chain, consisting of heights that average from 3000 to 4000 feet. From the Altaian system, north of the great table land in Central Asia, rivers of immense length and volume flow to the Northern Ocean in nearly parallel courses. The largest are the Obi, Yenesei, and Lena, the two former not less than 2500, the latter 2000 miles in length, averaging 1400 each, in a direct course. The only one of these which approaches any sea but the Frozen one, is the Lena, which flows toward the Sea of Okotsk, in the east, affording a possible mode of communication with the Pacific; but the usual mode of intercourse throughout the whole extent of Siberia is by descending the tributaries of the large rivers on one side, and ascending those on the opposite, as it is impossible to navigate them from their mouths, which are always blocked with ice. Siberia is a flat and marshy country; for, as the melted snows cannot force their way through the ice in the colder northern regions, they overflow the banks of the rivers, and carry away forests of timber, which they deposit on the coasts. It is supposed, from geological observations, that the low lands of Siberia stretch much further north at present than in former ages of the world, owing to the *débris* thus deposited. The soil is a mixture of ice and gravel, which does not deserve the name of sea or earth. No trees or shrubs grow there now, but there are many evidences that the climate was once warmer, from the fossil remains of both animals and plants. The whole of the country abounds in lakes;—or rather chains of ponds, or stagnant collections of water, occupy the marshy or submerged steppes that cover a great extent of its western territories. Its immense streams do not fertilize it, but are

> "Solid floods,
> That stretch athwart the solitary vast
> Their icy horrors to the frozen main."

Lake Baikal is the largest of the lakes. It is surrounded by lofty mountains, which not only supply its waters, but those of the great

rivers above mentioned. On the north of the lake, these mountains are covered with woods. It is 300 miles long, 50 broad, and is so completely frozen over in winter, that it affords safe passage for heavy wagons. Even in May, the navigation is much impeded by blocks of ice. This lake is viewed with very superstitious feelings by the natives, who call it the *Holy Sea*, and deem it dangerous to navigators to speak of it less reverently than by that name. They believe it to be guarded by spirits who produce, when offended, that peculiar agitation of its waters which often occurs from some unknown cause, even when the winds do not blow. It abounds with fish, particularly sturgeon, and with seals, which is remarkable, considering its distance from the ocean Its water is perfectly fresh, and it has no visible outlet. Many of the other lakes are saline, or impregnated with some mineral substances. M. Humboldt thinks it not improbable that the latter, which are very numerous, are remnants of some great interior sea, formerly connected with the salt waters of the Aral and the Caspian.

South of the Altaian chain, the rivers which flow from those mountains, being unable to pass the barriers that divide them from ocean waters, expand into interior salt lakes, which deserve the name of inland seas. The Caspian is not fed from Tartary, it is true, but by the Volga, and from the Caucasian and Ararat Mountains; but the Aral receives the Oxus and the Jaxartes, the two largest rivers of that region,—the former 1000, the latter 900 miles in length.

On the banks of these streams are found the most fertile and populous lands, and the most powerful states of Western Tartary.

The Lake of Lop, in Chinese Tartary, receives another series of rivers from the Beloor Tagh. The Irtysch, Angara, and Selinga, rise here, but break through the mountain barriers into Siberia. The Amoor, or Saghalien, flows along the foot of the Altaian chain, 2300 or 2400 miles, through the whole of Eastern Tartary, and vies in magnitude with the greatest Asiatic streams. But, from its position, it does not afford much assistance to the interests of commerce or communication.

Independent Tartary, which is separated from Chinese Tartary, is a region of very much lower level than any other part of Asia. The Caspian Sea, which lies in this depression, is said to be 280 feet below the Black Sea. This vast inland sea is 600 miles long, and 200 broad, where widest, but varying, generally, from 90 to 120 miles in width. From the north, it is fed by the Volga; from the west, by ample mountain streams, descending from the snowy heights of Caucasus and Ararat; from the south, by rapid and full torrents from the Elburz, and the Attruck enters it on the east;—but this border consists, for the most part, of sandy and dreary deserts. It has been supposed that all these waters must be disposed of by a subterranean passage connecting it with the Black Sea; but this is not consistent with the supposition above mentioned,—that its surface is 280 feet below the latter. It is said to be much lower than it was 200 years ago. It is shallow, and the immense evaporation of such a large surface of waters accounts sufficiently, perhaps, for the apparent waste. If it is true that the surface of the Caspian is so far below that of the Black Sea, Mr. Lyell says that "a trifling depression of that low, sandy tract which intervenes between the Caspian and the Sea of Azof,—a physical change

not impossible where so many earthquakes occur,—would cause the waters of the Sea of Azof to pour rapidly into the Caspian, and the former, borrowing from the Black Sea, the Black from the Mediterranean, and that again from the Atlantic, an inexhaustible current would pour down into the low tracts of Asia, bordering on the Caspian, by which all the sandy, salt steppes, adjacent to that sea, would be inundated. An area of at least 18,000 square leagues, (54,000 square miles,) now below the level of the Mediterranean, would be converted from land into sea. The diluvial waters would reach the salt Lake of Aral, nor stop until their eastern shores were bounded by the high land which, in the steppe of the Kirghis, connects the Altai with the Himmalaya Mountains.

"A few years, perhaps a few months, might suffice for the accomplishment of this great revolution in the geography of the interior of Asia; and it is impossible for those who believe in the permanence of the energy with which existing causes now act, not to anticipate analogous events again and again in the course of future ages."

The waters of the Caspian, except at the mouths of the rivers, are as salt as those of the ocean, and also bitter from a mixture of Glauber salts, supposed to be produced by the decomposition of the naphtha found in large quantities on its shores.

The navigation is very dangerous, particularly in the northern part, from heavy and sudden gales which descend from the cliffs, and also from the rocks and shallows abounding there. It contains many islands, but not of great dimensions.

The loftiest height between the Caspian and Black Seas is 16,500 feet above the level of the sea,—its boundary of perpetual snow being 11,000 feet, which is higher than on any mountain in the world, except some parts of the Himmalaya. The whole chain is formed entirely of porphyry. On both sides of this isthmus, naphtha and mud volcanoes are frequent; and ever since an eruption in 1827, columns of water have continued to flow forth from one point. North of the Caspian, the immediate shores are flat and marshy, and the country rises very gradually from these into a mountainous elevation terminating in the great chain of the Ural, whose heights nowhere rise abruptly, but may be attained with comparative ease in any common vehicles.

The rivers that flow into the Pacific, or Eastern Sea, as it is here called, are noble streams from China, which rise in the heart of Tartary. China is for the most part a flat and marshy level, every where highly cultivated, to maintain its overflowing population. The two great rivers, Hoang-ho, or Yellow River, and Yang-tse-kian, or Kianku, about 3000 miles in length, receive numberless tributaries from the north and south, which are connected in every direction by canals, which, indeed, are only the natural rivers turned out of their original direction. The Great Canal affords an uninterrupted communication of 500 miles from Pekin, on the Hoang-ho, to the great central stream of Yang-tse-kian, and thence 500 miles further to Canton. Canals form the foundation of the prosperity of China, and yet they are not constructed with any knowledge of science. The banks of the Hoang-ho are entirely alluvial in the eastern part of its course, and bring down so much mud and earth that its waters look like diluted mud. It is said to pour 2000 feet of solid earth into the sea every

hour,—a sufficient quantity to form, in seventy days, an island of a mile in circumference; and the Yellow Sea, into which it flows, diminishes in depth constantly.* The Yang-tse-kian rises in Thibet, very near the sources of the Hoang-ho, and, after flowing south, it bends northward again, and enters the Yellow Sea a hundred miles distant from the Hoang-ho. It is the nobler of the two, from its magnitude. The Chinese call it "the first-born of Ocean," and it is only rivalled by the rivers of the New World. The banks are most lovely, abounding in all the productions of the transition zone, of which it is the boundary line. What gives the transition zone its peculiar character is the combination of those species of plants which may be considered as belonging to the three regions,—the vegetation of the equatorial districts, of the northern, and the temperate. The first is seen in its decline, the second in its commencement, and the third in its full perfection. Whole hills are covered with the white camelias; tea grows wild in all the hedges; the sacred bean, or lotus flower, covers much of the surface of the river; and it is the northern boundary of the sugar-cane, which is originally a native of China, as is also the orange, although they both grow so luxuriantly in the West Indies. At the mouth of this river, winter prevails a fortnight, during which snow falls in the night, but melts at the rising of the sun. At Pekin, the winters are very severe. The lakes of China, which are numerous and noble sheets of water, the broad rivers, and even the sheltered bays, are as densely peopled, in many parts, as the land itself. They are covered with floating cities, whose crowded population has no home but upon the water. Cities also surround the lakes, many of which present highly picturesque, and sometimes mountainous scenery. The chief public works of China seem to have for their object the appropriation of every drop of water. The fields are irrigated from the rivers and canals by means of chain-pumps, and the very mountains are cut to form terraces, so constructed as to retain the requisite quantity of water to fertilize them, and to let the superfluity pass off; and reservoirs are formed on the summits to prevent any waste.

The country abounds in lakes, the largest of which, Tongting, is 300 miles in circumference, and Poyang is surrounded by wooded hills. Yet the lakes do not by their magnitude cover any large proportion of the vast surface of China.

Thibet contains a lofty table land between two ridges of the Himmalaya, which gives rise to all the great rivers of India and China proper. The Indus flows south-west, the Ganges south-east, the rivers of China east. The Lakes of Manasarowara and Rawan Hrad are very beautiful, encircled by some of the loftiest snow-clad peaks of the Himmalaya, and held by the Hindoos in religious veneration. They are supposed to have no outlet, but this has hardly been ascertained with sufficient accuracy to be asserted. Other lakes are found in Thibet, of which no particulars are known. Goats and sheep are used in Thibet for beasts of burden. All the merchandise is thus conveyed over the tremendous steeps and snows of the Himmalaya. The musk-deer of Thibet yields the valuable drug called musk, and the goat is

* Mr. Lyell says, "It has been suggested that a derangement of the waters of this river might cause an inundation which would lay the most fertile and populous plains of China under water."

found here that furnishes the wool for the shawls of Cashmere. The country is difficult of access to strangers, not only from its situation, but the singular character of the people. The rivers of Further India, Chin-India, or "India beyond the Ganges," flow, in parallel courses, between huge mountain chains, ranging from north to south, the whole country being composed of alternate mountains and broad valleys of extreme fertility. The Menam, called by the natives the "mother of waters," is 800 miles long. The sources of the Irrawaddy are still involved in mystery, but it is navigable several hundreds of miles for large boats. The Cambodia is another large river, and there are innumerable others, some of which fall into those above mentioned. This portion of India contains no lakes of any importance.

The rivers of Hindostan are scarcely less remarkable than its mountains. "The latter," says Mr. Murray, "receive their name, doubtless, from the Sanscrit word *hem*, snow, suggested by that long range of pinnacles, white with snow, that is seen far along the wide plain of Central India which luxuriates in the perpetual summer of the tropics."

The Ganges is supposed to rise in the southern steeps of the Himmalaya. After flowing a few miles from its source, with a depth of three feet, it passes under beds of snow so deep that even its sound is not heard, and then issues from a high wall of rock, by an orifice called, from its shape, the "Cow's Mouth." The lofty, peaked cliffs of the Himmalaya here shoot up to the skies, and nothing can be wilder than the scenery;—mountains piled on mountains, look like the ruins of a world; and the sources of the Jumna, its earliest tributary, spring from a dark glen not far distant, and equally peculiar and savage in its aspect. The main tributaries are from the north; numerous and large ones, however, flow from the south. About 220 miles, in a direct line, from the sea, it ramifies into a delta, forming a labyrinth of channels and creeks called the Sunderbunds. It is only by the Hoogly branch, which passes by Calcutta, that large vessels can ascend the river. "The area of this delta," Mr. Lyell says, "is considerably more than double that of the Nile. The flux and reflux of the tide extend even to the head of the delta, when the river is low; yet, when it is periodically swollen by tropical rains, the velocity of the stream counteracts the tidal current, so that, except very near the sea, the ebb and flow become insensible. So great is the quantity of mud and sand poured by the Ganges into the gulf in the flood season, that the sea only recovers its transparency at the distance of sixty miles from the coast." It has been calculated that the total annual discharge was, in 1831, 6,368,077,440 cubic feet, or 355,361,464 tons, nearly the weight of sixty pyramids of Egypt, each, like the Great Pyramid, occupying eleven acres, and measuring 500 feet high. This great operation is carried on tranquilly, and almost insensibly, by the Ganges, as it glides through its alluvial plain. No substance so coarse as gravel occurs in any part of the delta, nor nearer the sea than 400 miles, according to Mr. Lyell's description. This river and the Burrampooter, or Megna, which joins it forty miles from the sea, and forms a portion of the area of the delta, produces new islands constantly, which soon become fertile of shrubs, and populous with buffaloes, deer, and other wild animals. As new islands are formed, the old ones are often washed away. A strong

gale of wind, conspiring with a high spring tide, sometimes checks the descending current of the river, and gives rise to most destructive inundations.

"At the distance of thirty or forty miles from the coast, in the Bay of Bengal," says Mr. Lyell, "is a space, nearly circular, called the 'Swatch of no ground,' about fifteen miles in diameter, where soundings of 100, and even of 130 fathoms, fail to reach the bottom. This phenomenon is the more extraordinary, since the depression occurs within five miles of the line of shoals; and not only do the waters charged with the sediment of the Ganges pass over it continually, but, during the monsoons, the sea, loaded with mud, is beaten back in that direction toward the delta. As the mud is known to extend for eighty miles further into the gulf, we may be assured that, in the course of ages, the accumulation of strata in 'the Swatch' has been of enormous thickness; and we seem entitled to deduce, from the present depth at the spot, that the original inequalities of the bottom of the Bay of Bengal were on a grand scale, and comparable to those of the main ocean."

The Sind, or Indus, rises from sources in the table land of Thibet, near the Lake of Manasarowara, and, some suppose, from that lake. Four hundred miles south of its junction with the Kama, which pours into it the waters of Cabul and Cashgar, it receives, in one united channel, the waters of five rivers famous in history,—the Jelum, the Chenab, the Ravee, the Beya, and the Sutledge. These drain all the western steeps of the Himmalaya, and the last-mentioned crosses it from a source in Thibet. In the intervening 400 miles, it receives no tributary. It is said to pour into the sea four times as much water as the Ganges. Two large branches form a delta near its mouth, 70 miles broad, comprising the kingdoms of Sinde and Tatta, part of which is extremely fertile, but that nearest to the sea consists of a desert of flat and marshy sand. Here only flat-bottomed boats can navigate the river, but further inland, vessels of considerable burthen may sail upon the Indus. A large expanse of arid desert borders the Indus, on the eastern side.

The Indus and the Ganges finally absorb all the waters which descend from the southern side of the Himmalaya.

All the great rivers of Southern India flow across it from west to east, from the Ghaut Mountains on the western coast. These mountains are very lofty, and the only access from the western coast to the interior is through passes which are called *ghauts*, and which have given a name to the whole range. The word is said to have come into our language in the form of *gate*.

All the rivers are sacred in the eyes of the Hindoo, and their value to the prosperity of the country may well entitle them to reverence from an idolatrous people. The Ganges is the most sacred of all;—one part of it bears the name of the "Pool of Immortality," and a bath in its waters is supposed to wash out all the sins of humanity. There is not a lake in Hindostan,—the region of these great basins,—except Chilka, on the Coromandel coast, and that is a mere salt marsh.

The Himmalaya Mountains cut off the cold of the northern regions of Asia from Hindostan, and the tropical airs ascending their southern face, impregnated with the moisture of seas and rivers, render them equatorial in their productions, to a great height. The vine, in a

favorable exposure, grows 12.000 English feet above the sea. On the opposite side of these mountains, a very different scene presents itself. Thibet, bounded on all sides by insurmountable peaks, cutting off the action of seas and genial airs, is covered with saline incrustations. No large vegetable productions can be seen; the winters are long and severe, and the summers scorching. The eastern part is rather warmer, and more fruitful.

The Kama is the largest river of Independent Persia, which comprises the kingdoms of Beloochistan and Afghanistan. It flows from a lofty mountain, one peak of which rises 20,593 feet above the sea. The rivers that descend from these mountains, called the Hindu Koh, are not of the first magnitude, but flow with such headlong rapidity from the vast heights, especially when swollen by rain, that they quickly leave their beds dry. The Kama falls into the Indus; the Heermund, after a course of nearly 600 miles, forms the salt Lake of Zerrah, the only lake in the country.

The streams of Persia proper are absorbed in cultivation, or expand into lakes, but attain no great size. Persia is completely mountain-bound, except at the south. A range runs through the centre, also, leaving only a narrow pass between it and the Caspian Sea, called the Gates of the Caspian, and supposed by the ancients to be the only means of access from Southern to Northern Asia. Many rivers flow from Persia into the Caspian, and in the west some fine streams empty into the Tigris and Persian Gulf. The eastern part is a high table land, arid and sterile.

In Arabia, there is not a river. Torrents are sometimes seen dashing down the rocks, and fertilizing a small tract, but they are soon absorbed in the sand. They are never so copious as to form any thing that can be called a lake.

The Euphrates and Tigris rise in the depths of Mount Ararat, and dash through dark and rocky glens, in the early part of their course, till they swell, by degrees, into great rivers. The Euphrates first flows west, and then south-east, parallel with the Tigris, which derives its name from the word *teer*, (arrow,) from its straight course to the Persian Gulf. They unite 150 miles from the Persian Gulf, having enclosed the rich and beautiful plain of Mesopotamia. According to Murray, the Euphrates is 1400 miles, the Tigris 800. According to Worcester, their respective lengths are 1820 and 1000 miles. The other rivers of Turkey in Asia are famous in history, but not of great magnitude. It contains many lakes, but they are not as abundant as in the interior of Asia. Many of them are saline. The waters of the Asphaltites do not sustain life. The Sea of Tiberias is a beautiful sheet of water, lying among the mountains of Syria. The rivers that flow into the Archipelago are beautiful streams, but very small, celebrated only by the historical and poetical associations connected with them.

M.

Education is the peaceful corrector of evils which legislation cannot punish, and the active promoter of virtues which legislation cannot command.

NORMAL SCHOOLS.

[From the Salem Gazette.]

I have been very sorry not to see some report in the newspapers, of the discussions which took place at the American Institute of Education. They were all valuable, and this Institute is so important in its influences, that I think the newspaper press should cherish it. I understand that its funds are so low it could not afford to advertise its lectures, and thus the public lost the opportunity of hearing several of its favorites who would have drawn attention and interest upon the Institute. I wish, therefore, you would give place to the following report of a part of the evening's discussion, which had the most important bearings.

After several speakers had spoken on the question of the evening,—the importance of specific instruction for teachers, to fit them for their profession,—Dr. Howe, of the Perkins Institution for the Blind, arose to say that, while others had expressed their pleasure in discussing this question, he was only disposed to express regret that in this enlightened age, and this enlightened country, the question should arise, whether a man was to be specifically trained for this profession. He regretted that it could be gravely asked, whether a teacher, unlike the professor of any other art, should practise without any preparation; in other words, whether teachers were *born* teachers, or made so by training. Dr. Howe proceeded to say, that he had found in the last number of the Edinburgh Review which had just arrived, and had not yet been republished in this country, an article upon the Reports of the Massachusetts Board of Education, which contained views upon the subject in hand, i. e., the Normal Schools, so precisely similar to his own, and expressed so much better than he could express them, that he begged permission to read some passages to the audience.

"Every friend of education will recollect the bitter and inveterate hostility with which certain very moderate proposals, on the part of our own government, for the promotion of public instruction, were received in both Houses of Parliament, under the influence, in some instances, of a purely fanatical, and in others, of an unyielding party spirit. We regret to observe, that even in Massachusetts, where the people wield the supreme power, the efforts of the enlightened and philanthropic members of the community in this great cause are obstructed. In that State, hostility to the Board of Education has been strongly and perseveringly manifested, not only through the medium of the press, but in the Legislature. One circumstance, however, attending it, is consolatory. It has proceeded, not from religious and enlightened individuals, who have attended the conventions, studied the reports, and watched the proceedings of the Board, and by these means become capable of forming a sound judgment on their merits; but, apparently, from persons who are hostile to all improvements in the public mind, and who consider their own influence in danger of being diminished in proportion as that of reason and morality is increased.

"We are led to this conclusion by a statement of the Secretary, that the returns from the school committees in general breathe no hostility to the Board; by the unsound and factious arguments adduced by the opponents in support of their own views; and by their proposing simply to abolish the Board, without substituting any better institution in its place. The Secretary's testimony to the spirit of the school committees on the subject of religious instruction, is in these words: 'It will ever remain,' says he, 'an

honor to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, that, among all the reports of the school committees for the last year, so many of which are voluminous and detailed, and a majority of which probably were prepared by clergymen, belonging to all the different denominations of the State, *there was not one* which advocated the introduction of sectarian instruction, or sectarian books, into our public schools; while, with accordant views,—as a single voice, coming from a single heart,—they urge, they insist, they demand, that the great axioms of a Christian morality shall be sedulously taught, and that the teachers themselves shall be patterns of the virtues they are required to inculcate.' The opposition, therefore, proceeded from a different source, and it exhibited itself most formidably in the Legislature.

"On the 7th of March, 1840, the majority of a committee appointed by the House of Representatives, to report on the subject of education, recommended that the Board should be abolished, the Normal Schools suppressed, and the ten thousand dollars returned to Mr. Dwight, who had presented them to the State for the institution of these schools; and they reported the draft of a bill to carry these recommendations into effect! We do not enter into the arguments by which the committee attempted to support their recommendations, because they are neither interesting nor instructive with reference to this country. The minority of the committee, consisting of two persons only, presented a separate report, which *contrasts favorably with the malignant spirit and illogical composition of that of the majority.*

"The propositions of the majority were finally rejected by a vote of 148 members to 182.

"In February, 1841, a fresh attack was made on the Board, in the House of Representatives; but it also failed. The vote stood thus, for the Board 131, against it 114; giving a majority in its favor of 17. It is mentioned in the Boston newspapers, that the division took place in a thin house, and in circumstances otherwise unfavorable to the friends of education; but, nevertheless, it is considered as fatal to the opposition. If the motion to abolish the Board and the Normal Schools had passed both houses of the Legislature, and if no better institutions had been substituted in their stead, the cause of democracy would by that act have sustained a severer blow in Europe than it has suffered since the enormities of the French revolution. Massachusetts presents the most favorable specimen of democracy in the New World; she boasts of industry, wealth, religious zeal, and a comparatively enlightened population. Had her Legislature extinguished these institutions, and reverted to the previously existing educational arrangements, we should have been justified in inferring that democracy instinctively hates light, refinement, and civilization; and that its native atmosphere is that of ignorance, selfishness, and passion. The better spirit, however, prevailed, and we trust that the continued and increasing success of this scheme will hasten the day, when practicable measures for public instruction may be adopted in our own country, and supported by the liberal and good of all political and religious opinions."—*See Edinburgh Review, for July*, 1841.

Dr. Howe concluded by remarking, that, although the Board of Education was not the subject of discussion, Normal Schools had occupied so large a portion of its attention and its efforts, that this extract had an important bearing.

This extract and these remarks, of course, called up Mr. Frederick Emerson, who was present, and who, it is understood, had originally drafted the majority report referred to so severely by the European writer. Having ascertained that Dr. Howe did not know the author of this article, "and, though a Yankee, could not make even a tolerable guess" at this distance from the place where it was written, Mr. Emerson, with great emphasis, asserted that it was written by Mr. Combe.

Dr. Howe replied, that this was unlikely, as Mr. Combe was on the continent, very much absorbed in something else; and the style did not resemble Mr. Combe's style, with which he was very familiar; but if he did write it, he could only say, that he had written a very able article.

Mr. Emerson then asserted again that Mr. Combe wrote the article, and, moreover, that it was concocted in the publishing house of the Massachusetts Board of Education!* at which proposition, to which he adduced no proofs, a general smile went round the assembly. He then proceeded, with much warmth, to defend the majority report, and to restate its positions, viz., that the Board of Education had transcended its powers by authorizing the publication of a hundred volumes, which, (forgetting that the Board included persons of all religious sects and political parties,) he asserted to have, by necessity, a peculiar cast of religious and political opinion, and which were to take possession of the reading and writing public of Massachusetts, and thus control its literature. Mr. Emerson was greatly distressed at the thought of this great central power wielding the enormous engine of the School Library, to the utter destruction of all the literature of the world which he seemed to think would have no chance at all against these hundred volumes. Mr. E. said that the reason the majority of the committee had wished to destroy the Normal Schools was, because the art of teaching was not taught in these schools, but the same branches as taught in the Common Schools. He thought the Normal Schools should teach the art of teaching in some abstract manner.

[* Believing this statement to have been made by Mr. Emerson without any foundation in truth, we addressed the following note to Messrs. Marsh, Capen, Lyon, & Webb, and received a reply which we publish below, and from which it will be seen, that, instead of the article's being concocted here, and sent abroad to be published, and then returned, in order *that it might produce an effect*, this assertion was falsely made to prevent the article *from producing its due effect*. Ed.]

"Boston, *October 6th*, 1841.

"Messrs. Marsh, Capen, Lyon, & Webb,

"Gentlemen: At the last annual meeting of the American Institute of Instruction, there was a public debate on the expediency of a special training for teachers. In this debate, Dr. Howe read an extract from an article in the Edinburgh Review, for July, 1841, on the subject of the Massachusetts school system. In that article, the attack on the Board of Education, and the attempt to break up the Normal Schools, was severely condemned. Mr. Frederick Emerson, who was a member of the committee of the House of Representatives, in 1840, that reported the bill for the abolition of the Board and the Normal Schools, rose and asserted, positively and without qualification, that the article in the Edinburgh Review was concocted in the publishing house of the Massachusetts Board of Education, sent across the water to be published, and then returned in order to produce an effect here. As you are the publishers of the Massachusetts School Library, and the only publishing house with which the Board has had any connection, you must, of course, be the firm referred to. As I propose to publish some account of the debate, together with the other discussions before the Institute, will you be so good as to tell me whether the statement of Mr. Emerson, above referred to, is in any respect true?

"Very truly yours, &c. Horace Mann."

"*October* 6, 1841.

"Dear Sir: Your note of inquiry is just received, and we beg to say in reply, that we had no knowledge whatever of the article mentioned, until some time after its publication; nor have we any means of knowing its author. No member of the firm had seen the article at the time of the discussion to which you refer.

"We cannot forbear remarking, in this place, that it is a singular circumstance, to say the least, that the Board of Education should be so much opposed by one, who, as it is generally understood, was so desirous of being a member of it, that he, in substance, nominated himself as a candidate to one of the Governor's Council; and, in consequence of failure, has been hostile ever since to all the measures of the Board.

"Very respectfully, your most obedient servants,

"Marsh, Capen, Lyon, & Webb.

"Hon. Horace Mann."

Dr. Howe resumed, on Mr. Emerson's sitting down, that he knew the Normal Schools from actual inspection, and that Mr. Emerson apparently had not made himself acquainted with the facts. It was not true that the pupils of the Normal Schools learnt the same things as in the Common Schools, and in the same way. They were taught physiology, and other branches necessary for teachers, not taught in the Common Schools; and they were taught no one thing in the common way, but entirely, and with constant reference to teaching them again. The method of teaching every lesson was discussed at every recitation; also, the advantages and aim of every study was constantly considered.

Immediately on Dr. Howe's sitting down, Mr. Rantoul rose, to explain to such strangers to the debate in the Legislature, as might be misled by Mr. Emerson's statements,—that the Board of Education had not transcended their powers, by recommending a School Library which might be rejected by any school committee in the Commonwealth that did not like it;—for the law which established the Board, made it their *duty* to "*collect information of the actual condition and efficiency of the Common Schools, and other means of popular education; and diffuse as widely as possible, throughout every part of the Commonwealth, information of the most approved and successful mode of arranging the studies and conducting the education of the young; to the end that all children in this Commonwealth, who depend on the Common Schools for instruction, may have the best education which these schools can be made to impart.*" Now, these are the words of the law, said Mr. Rantoul, and this is the only end for which the Board was created. It became the duty, therefore, of the Board, to collect and diffuse information concerning schoolhouses, school libraries, and school teachers, especially; because these means of education the law has especially selected. The Board, therefore, in pursuance of its bounden duty, published a Report on the construction of Schoolhouses, which has been well received, and republished in other countries; and since that report was published, said Mr. R., more schoolhouses have been built in this State in one year, than in ten years, from 1828 to 1838. The Board has also suggested the establishment of Normal Schools, for the specific education of teachers, which has taken effect. The gentleman who has just taken his seat objects not to Normal Schools, he says, but to the studies pursued in those schools which the Board has established. As I drew up the list of these studies, in the first instance, said Mr. Rantoul, if the plan pursued is fundamentally wrong, I must incur as large a share of the responsibility of the error as any person. But that gentleman has been grossly misinformed, if he has been told that the art of teaching is not taught at our Normal Schools. It is taught incessantly, from the first to the last day of the tuition there. Mr. Rantoul illustrated the mode, by reference to the mode of teaching arithmetic there, and showed that it was unlike the method of any college or academy in the country, and the success thus far had been admirable.

With respect to the School Library, Mr. Rantoul referred to the law, as binding on the Board the duty of recommending to the school committees books for school libraries, which another law of the Commonwealth prescribed. The Board had no power to command the

school committees. It simply did its duty by collecting information and diffusing it, concerning books. An enterprising publishing house undertook to publish, at their own risk, in suitable form, such books as all the Board, who are of different religious and political parties, agree to recommend. No compulsion is used, or can be used. The gentleman had spoken as if the literature of Massachusetts was curtailed by the publication of a hundred new books! It seemed to Mr. Rantoul that it was *augmented* by a hundred volumes; and, moreover, that these would help to form the taste and increase the demand for other good books, from all other quarters. The school committees were not confined to these hundred volumes. They might reject them, every one. Those, also, who preferred teachers not educated at the Normal Schools, could find and employ them; and those who did not like the Board's plans of schoolhouses, might use other plans. The Board was not a *power*. It was merely a source of light, which those who wished might avail themselves of. The notion of confining the reading of the people of Massachusetts to the School Library, was too preposterous to have entered into the head of any member of the Board. For himself, he could not conceive how it could have found its way into that of any reasonable creature!—The involuntary and ringing laugh of Mr. Rantoul, as he said these words, and sat down, was so good-natured, as well as well-timed, that it was impossible it should not be reëchoed by all who heard it, that were not made solemn by strange prejudices.

Mr. George S. Hillard followed Mr. Rantoul. He said he did not rise to defend the Massachusetts Board of Education from the charge of having transcended its powers. That matter had been settled,—that battle had been fought. *He could not, however, suppose it possible that Mr. Emerson could think people so simple as to believe that the alleged reasons of the opposition were the real ones.* But he had some views to offer with reference to what Mr. E. had said of teaching the art of teaching, abstracted from the study of what was to be taught. If, as Mr. Emerson said, the branches taught in the Common Schools were also taught in the Normal Schools, it was not that these were not known to the pupils in a certain way, but because their knowledge was so loosely arranged it was necessary to go all over the steps by which they attained it, in order to reärrange it for communication. Every person, however educated, at college or elsewhere, who undertakes to teach, finds it necessary to go over the ground again, and to reconsider the elements of his knowledge, and reconstruct it. The art of teaching cannot be taught abstractly. It must be connected with specific lessons. Mr. Hillard enlarged on this with much acuteness and good sense, and showed that the very ends Mr. Emerson proposed for a Normal School, could only be obtained in the very manner in which the schools are, in fact, conducted.

Dr. Peabody followed Mr. Hillard, to say, that that gentleman, in his lucid statement, had, however, omitted one very important feature of the Normal School, and that is, the Model School, connected with the Normal School, which is directed by the teachers of the former, and conducted by the assistance of the pupils of the Normal School, who take charge of the classes by months alternately, and immediately apply to practice the methods suggested in the lessons on the art of teaching.

Mr. G. B. Emerson, President of the Institute, rose to close the meeting with some further remarks. He spoke of his own impressions on visiting the Normal School of Lexington, from which he had returned with mingled feelings of admiration and despair; and said, that although he had himself taught many years, and with some success, he could not avoid wishing that he could for a season suspend the labors of his vocation, and go there to learn, with the favored pupils of that institution, *how to teach*. He had heard the same wish expressed by another teacher, who had also been successful in her own efforts, and who had been able to spend more time than he had done, in visiting the school in Lexington. That person, like himself, had felt and expressed, that the Model School, taught by the young ladies, was the best school she had ever seen,—the pupils all alive and in earnest. He spoke particularly of one study pursued in that school with signal success. It was generally taught so ill that he had considered the time devoted to it absolutely wasted, and had desired to strike it from the course of children's studies. But here, *grammar*,—for to that he referred,—was taught without its technicalities, and was a proof of the inestimable value of the teacher's learning how to train the minds of pupils. Mr. G. B. Emerson thought if Mr. Frederick Emerson had visited the Normal Schools in person, he would perceive that they answered the end he himself proposed, and taught in a most effectual manner just what he said ought to be taught. No reply was made, and the meeting adjourned.

During the severity of that general pressure in the money market, a few years since, an intelligent gentleman in the city of New York, made the circuit of the theatrical establishments, for a single evening, when no peculiar attractions existed to fill the houses to an unusual degree. He calculated the numbers he found in attendance, and came to the conclusion that not less than $4500 had been paid that evening as admission money. If to this sum should be added only $500 more for individual expenses and refreshments, the tax for theatrical shows in one evening would amount to $5000. Had a tax been proposed for improving the Public Schools, or for raising the compensation of teachers somewhat nearer what it should be, how many of these persons would have advocated it?

FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

(Continued from page 320.)

BOOKS.

When the scholars meet the teacher appointed for the school, they must be provided with books. It is, of course, presumed, that the school committee have seasonably complied with the law in prescribing a list of books, so that it will be universally known what books are required. As our schools are at present conducted, books are the storehouses or reservoirs, whence the scholars draw their daily sup-

plies of knowledge. Excepting the oral instruction, given by the teacher, the pupils must derive knowledge directly from books, or originate it themselves, or leave the school without it. The teacher cannot give much oral instruction to those who do not coöperate with him by studying text books; the amount of useful knowledge, which the pupils can themselves originate, is indefinitely small; and, therefore, the parents who send their children to school without books, ought not to complain if they leave it without knowledge. To borrow a book of a neighbor's child, and thereby deprive him of the use of it, is not merely like borrowing one of his utensils or implements,—it is like borrowing his well-stored granary or barn. That deficiency of books which leads to borrowing, is, in this State, left without excuse, because it is here provided by law, that when any parent is pecuniarily unable to furnish the requisite books for his children, they shall be supplied at the expense of the town;—the Legislature wisely judging that the present cost of suitable books and instruction for such children, is not to be compared with the prospective expense of poor-houses and prisons. This law is evidently much better observed now than it was three years ago, when the attention of the public was first called to it, though there are still cases of non-compliance.

A uniformity of school books for scholars of similar ages and attainments, is so important, that, although it was dwelt upon at considerable length in my first annual report, I wish, for a moment, to recur to it again. Uniformity in books belongs to classification of scholars; without uniformity, indeed, classification is impossible, and without classification a school loses its collective character, and becomes a promiscuous company of individuals. Should a teacher hear his scholars recite, individually,—the first in geography, the second in grammar, the third in arithmetic, and so on, all must see the inevitable waste of time, and the spiritless routine of the exercises. But one scholar may recite in geography, the next in grammar, and the third in arithmetic, and so forth, just as well as two can recite together from two books of geography, one of which treats, first, of mathematical or astronomical geography, then of civil or political, and then of physical; while the other takes up the political divisions of the earth, one by one, but embraces all the civil, physical, and mathematical descriptions under the successive political heads. It seems not to be considered, that, though all the books may be labelled "geography," yet that a different arrangement of their contents makes them different books, and renders simultaneous teaching from them impossible.

Whatever defeats classification destroys the power of the teacher; and the loss of power increases in far more than a direct ratio;—the progression being rather geometrical than arithmetical. If the teacher is compelled to divide the time which he should devote to one class, into two or three parts, in order to hear two or three classes in the same study, but with different books, all his opportunity for illustration and for oral instruction is taken away, because his whole time is occupied in hastening through the lesson. But if, as has sometimes been the case, the teacher is compelled to divide the time for a recitation in one branch, into six or eight parts, because there are six or eight different kinds of books, there will be hardly power enough left to be the subject of computation. The energies of the most efficient teacher

will be broken down under such a system, or rather such want of system. For many other evils, an ingenious teacher may devise some palliation, some mitigating alternative; but for this, there is but one remedy, viz., a conformity with the law, by the school committee, and a conformity with the committee's directions, by the parents and guardians.

A very simple expedient, adopted in many towns, has resulted in the desired reform; and by means of it, the end is attained without exciting the opposition of parents. Let a list of the books prescribed by the committee, be entered on the register which is to be given to each teacher at the opening of the school; or let a list be given to the teacher, at the time of his examination, which it will then be his duty to enter upon the register; or, as some committees do, let a copy of this list be hung up in the schoolroom, as a general advertisement to the district. Let all the booksellers in the town, or in the neighboring towns, if any, where the parents go to purchase school books, be furnished with copies of the same list. These booksellers, being made acquainted with the kinds of books prescribed for the schools, will readily conclude that they can sell more of the approved than of the unapproved kinds; they will be disposed, therefore, from motives of interest, to procure the former; and the right kinds of books being more accessible than the wrong, will naturally tend towards the schoolroom by a sort of outward pressure as well as by a gravitation within, and will soon become its sole occupants. When a uniformity is thus established throughout the town, not only will all the mischiefs above described be avoided, but a poor family, to whom the expense of school books is sometimes a serious burden, can remove from one district to another in the same town, without either buying a new set of books, or aggravating the evil of diversity which may already exist in the school, by carrying in its old ones.

By the 19th section of the 23d chapter of the Revised Statutes, school committees are authorized to purchase class books, at the expense of the town, and to establish depositories for them, where they shall be sold at such prices as just to reimburse the expense. The adoption of this plan, also, would soon result in a uniformity of books in the schools.

SCHOOL APPARATUS AND SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

The utility of apparatus and libraries, as instruments of instruction, and as means of general improvement, having been spoken of heretofore at great length, I will only add, that observation, and the testimony of all intelligent teachers and educationists conspire to prove, that the children who are destitute of these aids, do not make half the progress they otherwise would; and thus are passing away the years which are never to return, without those means of knowledge and of usefulness, which a slight encouragement, on the part of the State, such as was recommended by the Board in their report of last year, would place within the reach of the entire rising generation.

In the year 1838, under the recommendation of Governor Marcy, the Legislature of New York appropriated, from the school fund, $55,000 annually, for three years, to the purchase of district school libraries, on condition that the towns would raise an equal amount for

the same purpose. In 1839, under the administration of Governor Seward, the appropriation was extended on the same conditions, for a further term of years; and, in the late message of the last-named governor, it is said that almost every district in the State is now in possession of a library;—the number of volumes already amounting, in the whole, to about one million. By an inquiry, made last year, in regard to the schools in Massachusetts, it was found that there were but about ten thousand volumes in all the District School Libraries in the State.

"Within the five years limited by the law," says Governor Seward, "there will have been expended, in the purchase of books, more than half of a million of dollars. Although an injudicious choice of books is sometimes made, these libraries generally include history and biography, voyages and travels, works on natural history and the physical sciences, treatises upon agriculture, commerce, manufactures, and the arts, and judicious selections from modern literature. Henceforth, no citizen who shall have improved the advantages offered by our Common Schools, and the District Libraries, will be without some scientific knowledge of the earth, its physical condition and phenomena, the animals that inhabit it, the vegetables that clothe it with verdure, and the minerals under its surface; the physiology and the intellectual powers of man; the laws of mechanics, and their practical uses; those of chemistry, and their application to the arts; the principles of moral and political economy; the history of nations, and especially that of our own country; the progress and triumph of the democratic principle in the governments on this continent, and the prospects of its ascendency throughout the world; the trials and faith, valor and constancy of our ancestors, with the inspiring examples of benevolence, virtue, and patriotism exhibited in the lives of the benefactors of mankind. The fruits of this enlightened and beneficent enterprise are chiefly to be gathered by our successors. But the present generation will not be altogether unrewarded. Although many of our citizens may pass the District Library, heedless of the treasure it contains, the unpretending volumes will find their way to their fireside, diffusing knowledge, increasing domestic happiness, and promoting public virtue."

It surely is a subject for rejoicing, that the youth of any portion of our common country should enjoy the aids to learning, the incitements to virtue, and the restraints from temptation, furnished by a library of good books; for it is as though the distinguished authors of those books, together with the wise and good men whose lives and deeds they record, should reappear upon the earth, and again come and take up their residence among men, and should proffer their counsel and guidance, to enlighten, to instruct, to please, to persuade all, or any of those who would seek society and communion with them. But is it not matter of regret, if not of humiliation, that while the children of a sister and a border State are enjoying these inestimable privileges, the children of Massachusetts,—a State which has taken the lead in so many noble enterprises of benevolence and patriotism,—that these children, to whom we are bound by all the ties of consanguinity and duty, should be destitute of equal means of material and of mental improvement!

(To be continued.)

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